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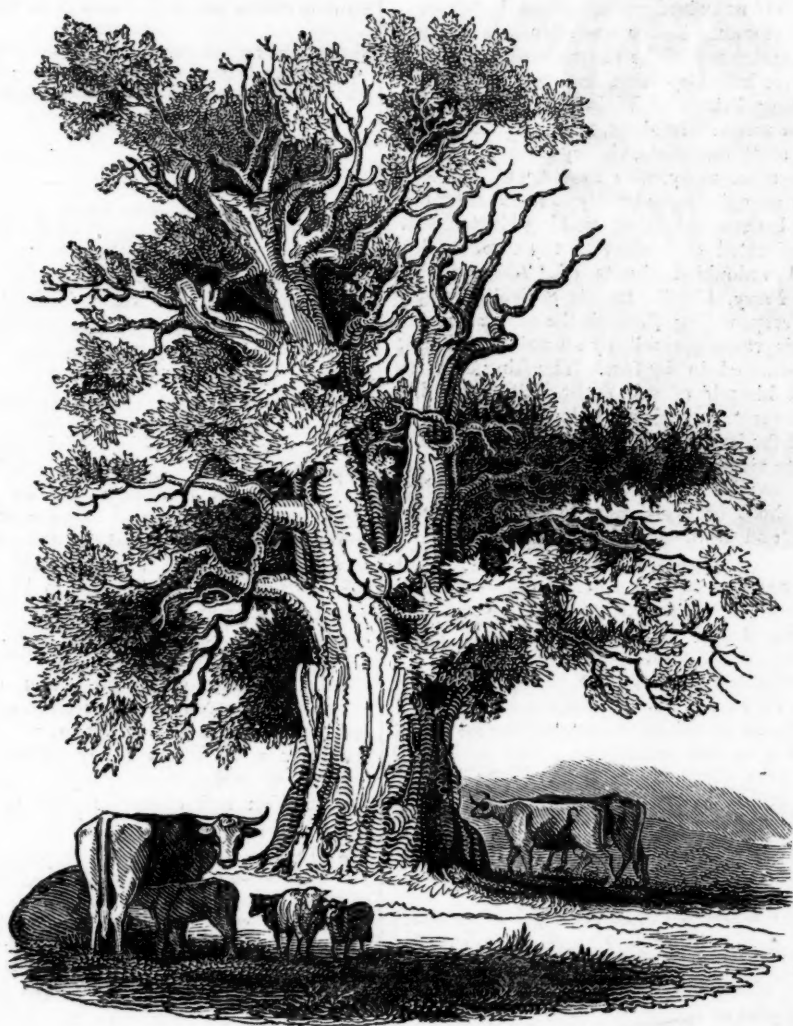
DECEMBER

29TH, 1832.

PRICE
ONE PENNY.



UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION,
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.



OWEN GLENDOWER'S OAK.

OWEN GLENDOWER'S Oak is situated at Shelton, distant about a mile from Shrewsbury, and by the side of the road leading from that town to Oswestry. It has its name from a tradition of Owen Glendower having mounted the tree to gain a view of the battle of Shrewsbury. This battle was fought on the 20th of July, 1403, between the forces of Henry the Fourth, then king of England, and those of Sir Henry Percy, commonly called Hotspur, eldest son of the Earl of Northumberland. Henry the Fourth had not been long on the throne, before he found that he had many enemies; among the most formidable of whom were the Earl of Northumberland, and Owen Glendower, who was descended from the ancient sovereigns of Wales. These two persons became discontented with Henry's government, and formed a scheme for uniting together to dethrone

him. The Earl's eldest son, Hotspur, was to march with a large army from the north of England, and Glendower was to meet him with such forces as he could collect in Wales.

As soon as the king was aware of these hostile movements, he marched in all haste, to come up with Hotspur before he was joined by Glendower. The royal army entered Shrewsbury only a few hours before Hotspur arrived at the gates. This was on the 19th of July, and the king was anxious to give battle without delay. Hotspur, however, did not feel himself strong enough for this, having not above fourteen thousand men in his army, whereas the king had nearly double that number. On the following morning, the king's forces marched out of the town, and succeeded in forcing Hotspur to an engagement, of which the following interesting account is taken from the History of Shrewsbury.

"The fight began by furious and repeated volleys

of arrows from Hotspur's archers, whose ground greatly favoured that kind of warfare; and they did great execution on the royal army. The king's bowmen were not wanting in return, and the battle raged with violence. Hotspur, with his associate, Douglas, bent on the king's destruction, rushing through the midst of the hostile arrows, pierced their way to the spot on which he stood. Henry was thrice unhorsed, and would have been taken or slain, had he not been defended and rescued by his own men: and the fortune of the day would have been forthwith decided, if the Earl of March had not withdrawn him from the danger; for the royal standard-bearer was slain, his banner beaten down, and many of the chosen band appointed to guard it, were killed by these desperate assailants; while the young Prince of Wales was wounded in the face by an arrow. In short, notwithstanding all the exertions of the royalists, victory seemed inclined to favour the rebel army, who fought with renewed ardour, from an opinion, naturally derived from the overthrow of his standard, that the king himself had fallen, and animated each other to the combat with cheering and redoubled shouts of '*Henry Percy, king! Henry Percy, king!*' In this critical moment, the gallant Percy, raging through the adverse ranks in quest of his sovereign, fell by an unknown hand, alone, and hemmed in by foes. The king lost no time to avail himself of this event. Straining his voice to the utmost, he exclaimed aloud, '*Henry Percy is dead!*' and the battle soon ended in the king gaining a complete victory.

"In the mean while, Owen Glendower had marched with a large body of Welchmen to within a mile of Shrewsbury; and if the king had not been so rapid in his movements, Glendower and Hotspur would probably have joined their forces. It was necessary, however, that the Welch army should cross the Severn, which, at this place, is a broad and rapid river. It happened, also, most unfortunately for Glendower, that the water was at this time exceedingly high. There is a ford at Shelton, by which, at other seasons, he would have been able to cross the river, but now it was impossible. The bridges at Shrewsbury were commanded by the king; and he had nothing to do but to halt his army on the banks of the Severn, though he could see Hotspur's forces quite plainly on the opposite side, and though he knew that the king was wishing to bring on a battle. The battle took place as we have related.

"The place, where the fight was thickest, is about three miles from Shrewsbury, and is still called Battle-field; and King Henry built a handsome church there, which is still used as a parish church, though great part of it is in ruins."

The tradition of the country says, that Glendower mounted the large oak tree, of which we give an engraving, and that he saw from thence the battle of Shrewsbury. The story is most probably true. It would be difficult to account for its being told by the common people of the neighbourhood, if there was not some truth in it. These people are not likely to have heard of Owen Glendower, or the battle of Shrewsbury: and if Glendower really arrived at this spot, and could not get over the river on account of a flood, (of which facts there seems to be no doubt,) it is not at all unlikely that he mounted up into the tree. Battle-field church can now be seen very plainly from the bank of the river. It is not much more than three miles off; and at the time the battle was fought, the country was, perhaps, much more open than it is at present, and there were few hedges to shut out the view; so that Glendower might easily have seen what was going on between the two armies;

and it must have been very mortifying to him to see the troops of his friend Hotspur totally defeated.

There is no difficulty in believing, from the present appearance of the tree, that it is old enough to have been of a considerable size in the year 1403, or 429 years ago. Oaks are known to live to a much greater age than this; and there are documents which prove that the Shelton oak was a fine large tree some centuries ago. It is still perfectly alive, and bears some hundreds of acorns every year, though it has great marks of age, and is so hollow in the inside, that it seems to stand on little more than a circle of bark. At least six or eight persons might stand within it. The dimensions are as follows:—

The girth at bottom, close to the ground, is forty-four feet three inches; at five feet from the ground, twenty-five feet one inch; at eight feet from the ground, twenty-seven feet four inches. Height of the tree, forty-one feet six inches.

E. B.

ERRORS RESPECTING RELIGIOUS MELANCHOLY.

THERE exists a prejudice against religious seriousness, arising from a notion that religion leads to gloom and melancholy. This notion, I am convinced, is a mistake. Some persons are constitutionally subject to melancholy, which is as much a disease in them, as the ague is a disease; and it may happen that such men's melancholy shall fall upon religious ideas, as it may upon any other subject which seizes their distempered imagination. But this is not religion leading to melancholy. Or it sometimes is the case that men are brought to a sense of religion by calamity and affliction, which produce at the same time depression of spirits. But neither here is religion the cause of this distress or dejection, or to be blamed for it. These cases being excepted, the very reverse of what is alleged against religion is the truth.

No man's spirits were ever hurt by doing his duty. On the contrary, one good action, one temptation resisted and overcome, one sacrifice of desire or interest purely for conscience' sake, will prove a cordial for weak and low spirits beyond what either indulgence, or diversion, or company can do for them. And a succession and course of such actions and self-denials, springing from a religious principle, and manfully maintained, is the best possible course that can be followed as a remedy for sinkings and oppressions of this kind.

Can it then be true, that religion leads to melancholy? Occasions arise to every man living; to many very severe as well as repeated occasions, in which the hopes of religion are the only stay that is left him. Godly men have that within them which cheers and comforts them in their saddest hours; ungodly men have that which strikes their heart, like a dagger, in its gayest moments. Godly men discover, what is very true, but what, by most men, is found out too late, namely, that a good conscience, and the hope of our Creator's final favour and acceptance, are the only solid happiness to be attained in this world. Experience corresponds with the reason of the thing.

I take upon me to say, that religious men are generally cheerful. If this be not observed, as might be expected, supposing it to be true, it is because the cheerfulness which religion inspires does not show itself in noise, or in fits and starts of merriment, but is calm and constant. Of this, the only true and valuable kind of cheerfulness, for all other kinds are hollow and unsatisfying, religious men possess not less, but a greater share than others.—PALEY.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

NEW YEAR'S DAY must always bring with it a mixed feeling to every reflecting mind. We are all grown a year older, but how few of us can say, that they are become either wiser or better? To many, the past year may have been one of suffering or anxiety; and the difference of their situation, with what it was at the commencement of the year 1832, will press very forcibly upon their memory, when its anniversary arrives. On the other hand, we must all be grateful to Providence for being permitted to see even the opening of another year,—that we have thus had longer time allotted us for the correction of bad habits, and the further improvement of good ones.

The prosperous will anticipate that it may bring fresh accessions of happiness and enjoyment, while the unfortunate will cherish the hope that, with the old year, his distress may have an end, and that the sunshine of the new year will dissipate the gloom and darkness of the one that is past.

The year did not always begin on the 1st of January, but was considered as commencing on the 25th of March*. This being the cause of great inconvenience (especially in carrying on a correspondence with foreigners), was remedied in this country, by an Act of Parliament passed in 1752, by which it was enacted, that the 1st of January should be reckoned to be the first day of the year, and eleven days in that year succeeding the 2nd September (what would have been the 3rd being called the 14th,) were thrown out†.

The *Old Style* still prevails in Muscovy, Denmark, Holstein, Hamburg, Utrecht, Guilders, East Friesland, Geneva, and in all the Protestant principalities in Germany, and cantons of Switzerland.

The *New Style* is used in all the dominions subject to Great Britain; in America, in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Leyden, Haerlem, Middleburgh, Ghent, Brussels, Brabant, and in other places in the Netherlands; also in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, Poland, and in all the Popish principalities of Germany, and cantons of Switzerland.

In former days, heavy demands were made upon the purse at this season; and the Household Books of our Kings and Queens contain notices of innumerable offerings from different classes of their subjects: as a proof of which, the following list of new year's gifts, presented to Queen Elizabeth, in 1584-5, may amuse our readers. From this it appears that the peers, chief officers of state, and several of the Queen's household-servants, even down to her apothecaries, master cook, serjeant of the pastry, &c., gave new year's gifts to the queen.

These gifts consisted either of a sum of money, or jewels, trinkets, wearing apparel, &c. The largest sum given by any of the temporal lords, was twenty pounds; but the Archbishop of Canterbury gave forty pounds, and all the other spiritual lords, thirty, twenty, and ten pounds. Many of the temporal lords and great officers, and most of the peeresses, gave rich gowns, petticoats, kirtles, doublets, mantles, some embroidered with pearls, garnets, &c.; bracelets, caskets studded with precious stones, and other toys. The queen's physician presents her with a box of foreign sweetmeats. Another physician with two pots, one of green ginger, the other of orange flowers. Her apothecary with a box of lozenges and a pot of conserves. Her master cook, with a "fayre marche-payne," (a macaroon then in fashion;) her serjeant

of the pastry, a "fayre pye oringed." The money given on this occasion, amounts to 828*l.* 7*s.* 0*d.*; the jewels, trinkets, apparel, &c., not being valued‡.

We must not think, however, that the crowned head was only a receiver of gifts. There were heavy demands on the liberality of the reigning monarch; and as the presents of a king or queen must necessarily have been both more numerous and more costly than those of a subject, the tax upon the royal bounty was very considerable.

On the back of the list before quoted, appear the New Year's Gifts presented by the queen in return; the whole of which consists of gilt plate:—to the Earl of Leicester, 132 ounces; to the Earl of Warwick, 106 ounces; but to all the other earls, thirty and twenty ounces: to the Duchess of Somerset (the only duchess), twenty-five ounces; to the countesses, fifty, forty, and twenty ounces; to the Archbishop of Canterbury forty-five ounces; to the other prelates thirty-five, thirty, twenty, and fifteen ounces; to Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chamberlain, 400 ounces; to all her maids of honour and gentlewomen of her household, as well those who presented gifts, as those who did not, from twenty to two ounces. Thus—to Mrs. Tomysen, the dwarf, two ounces; to the physicians thirteen, the apothecary seven, the cook and serjeant of the pastry, five ounces. Sum total, 4809 ounces of gilt plate.

The following extracts from LODGE'S *Illustrations of British History* (vol. ii.), are pleasing proofs of the interchange of kindness and good feeling, at this period of the year, between a son and his father, and two of the noblemen of Queen Elizabeth's court:—

According to my riches, and the country I dwell in, and not to my desire, I send your lordship a new-year's gift: a Monmouth cap§ and a rundlet of perry; and I must require pardon to name the other homely thing, a pair of Ross boots, which, if they be fit for your lordship, you may have as many as please you to appoint. I beseech Almighty God to preserve your lordship many happy new-year's days, that you may live as many and joyful years after them, as ever did any creature!—Goodrich Castle, 3rd Jan., 1576.

—Gilbert Talbot to his father, the Earl of Shrewsbury
And for that I find warmth doth breed me some ease, supposing that the self-same things which are employed towards me that way cannot be hurtful to your lordship, I have sent you a small rug by this bearer, to wrap about your legs at times convenient; which your lordship must accept as I present it, and as though our country wools were much finer, and our workmen more curious; and withall your lordship shall receive a case of Hallomshire whittles||, being such fruits as my poor country affordeth with fame throughout this realm.—Handsworth, last of January, 1589.—*The Earl of Shrewsbury, to Lord Burleigh.* H.M.

THE BELL-SHAPED SEA-NETTLE.

Medusa Campanulata.

WHOEVER has been in the habit of walking on the sea shore, must have observed, when the tide has retired, a number of substances, lying on the sand, in appearance like masses of jelly; in the summer season they are extremely abundant, and in warmer

‡ *Archæologia*, vol. i.

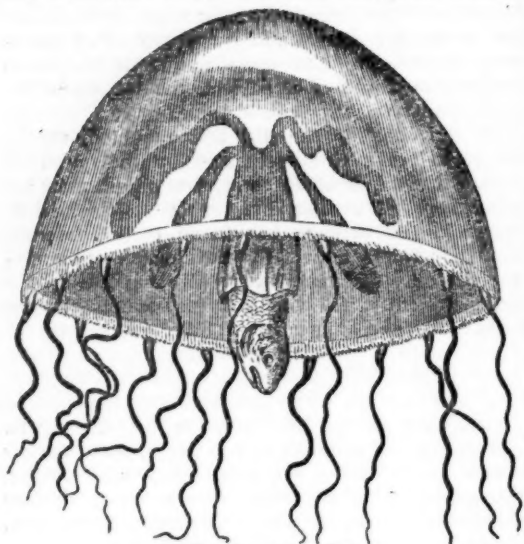
§ "The best caps were formerly made at Monmouth; but, on the occasion of a great plague happening in that town, the trade was removed to Bewdley in Worcestershire, yet so that they are called *Monmouth Caps* unto this day."—FULLER'S *Worthies*. In order to promote the use of woollen caps, it was enacted, in 1566, that no man under the degree of a knight, should wear any hat or cap of velvet, under a penalty of ten shillings; and, in 1570, a further law was passed, that every person above the age of seven years should wear, upon the Sabbath and holidays, a cap of wool knit, made in England, on pain of forfeiting daily three shillings and four pence, (excepts maids, ladies, lords, knights, gentlemen, mayors of cities, &c., and the wardens of the Companies of London.) This provision continued in force till 1597.

|| A whittle was a knife, which was sometimes worn suspended by a cord to the girdle. Handsworth was situated about four miles south of Sheffield, then, as now, famous for its cutlery, and especially for its knives.

* See the article YEARS, in the Calendar, p. 247.

† To expose the clamours which are too often idly raised against the laws, that clever painter, Hogarth, alluded to the change of the style, very happily, in one of his election pictures:—on a flag is written, "Give us our eleven days!" as if every individual had been actually robbed, by an Act of Parliament, of a portion of his life.

climates are found of a very large size. These substances, notwithstanding their appearance, will be found on examination to be living bodies, and as perfectly formed for all the purposes of their nature, as any other part of the works of the great Creator.



The Bell-Shaped Sea Nettle.

Their bodies are nearly transparent, and the different organs they enclose are faintly visible to the eye; their form is that of a saucer upside down, and the mouth, as may be seen by the engraving, is placed below. The outward edge of this body is furnished with numerous arms, which gradually taper towards the ends, where they appear like so many threads; with these arms, the creature is able to convey its food to its mouth; small fish, or any other animal substance that comes within its reach, afford it the means of subsistence.

The indigestible parts of the food which are swallowed, are, after a time, returned by means of the mouth.

Many varieties of the Medusa are phosphorescent; that is, they shine at night with a pale blue flame, like that of phosphorus, and their appearance, when floating in large groups on the surface of the sea, on a dark night, is extremely beautiful. Some species have the power of benumbing the hand, when touched, and have had the name of Sea-nettles applied to them. The appearance of many is peculiarly graceful and elegant, when floating in their native element, from the delicate colours with which they are adorned. The bodies of some among them are of a light azure blue, the border surrounded with the appearance of golden beads like a coronet, from which stream, in every direction, delicate threads of a bright carmine colour; in short, almost all those that are found in warmer climates have something pleasing either in form or colour. The annexed engraving is an enlarged view of the object represented, its natural size being about one inch in width. It is an inhabitant of the Greenland seas.

HINDOO FESTIVALS.

ONE of the Hindoo festivals in honour of the goddess Kali, commenced this evening. Near the river a crowd was assembled round a stage of bamboos, fifteen feet high, composed of two upright, and three horizontal poles; which last were placed at about five feet asunder. On this kind of ladder several men mounted, with large bags, out of which they threw down various articles to the by-standers, who

caught them with great eagerness; but I was too far off to ascertain what they were. They then, one by one, raised their joined hands over their heads, and threw themselves down, with a force which must have proved fatal, had not their fall been broken by some means or other. The crowd was too dense to allow of my discovering how this was effected; but it is certain they were unhurt, as they immediately reascended, and performed the same ceremonies many times.

On the 10th, we were awakened before day-break, by the discordant sounds of native musical instruments, and immediately mounted our horses, and rode to the Meidân. As the morning advanced, we could see an immense crowd coming down the Chowringhee road, which was augmented by persons joining it from all the streets and lanes of the city. We entered the crowd, taking the precaution of making the saees walk close by my horse's head, who was frightened at the music, dancing, and glare of torches, accompanied at intervals by the deep sound of the gong.

The double, double peal of the drum was there,
And the startling sound of the trumpet's blare,
And the gong, that seemed with its thunders dread
To stun the living, and waken the dead.

In the midst of this crowd, walked and danced the miserable fanatics, torturing themselves in the most horrible manner, and each surrounded by his own particular band of admirers, with music and torches. . . . Their countenances denoted suffering; but they evidently gloried in their patient endurance, and probably were supported by the assurance that they were expiating the sins of the past year by suffering voluntarily, and without a groan, this agony.

We had considerable difficulty in making our way through the crowd; but when we had arrived at a short distance from the scene of action, the sight was beautifully picturesque, and forcibly reminded me of an English race-course: flags were flying in every direction,—booths were erected with stages for dancing; the flowing white garments of the natives gave the impression of a numerous assemblage of well-dressed women; and though, on a nearer approach, their dingy complexions destroyed the illusion, yet the scene lost nothing of its beauty. I never saw in England such a multitude collected together; but this is one of their most famous festivals, and the people had assembled from all the neighbouring villages. The noise of the music continued till about noon, when the devotees retired to heal their wounds. These are said to be dangerous, and occasionally to prove fatal. One of our servants, a "Musalchee," or torch-bearer, of the lowest caste, (for it seems that none of a higher sort practise these cruelties,) ran about the house with a small spear through his tongue, begging money from his fellow-servants; this man appeared stupefied with opium, which, I am told, is generally taken by these poor wretches, to deaden their feelings; and the parts through which the spears are thrust, are said to be previously rubbed for a considerable time, till numbness ensues.

In the evening, the bishop walked to the Boitaconah, the part of the city where the trees for swinging are erected: they are not suffered to be placed near the European residence. He arrived in time to be a spectator of the whole ceremony. The victim was led, covered with flowers, and without any apparent reluctance, to the foot of the tree; hooks were then thrust through the muscles of his sides, which he endured without shrinking, and a broad bandage was fastened round his waist, to prevent the hooks from being torn through by the weight of his body. He was then raised up, and was whirled round; at first, the motion was slow, but by degrees was increased to

considerable rapidity. In a few minutes, it ceased; and the by-standers were going to let him down,



when he made signs that they should proceed: this resolution was received with great applause by the crowd, and, after drinking some water, he was again spun round.—*HEBER'S Journal.*

THE GREAT SOUTH AMERICAN LANTERN-FLY.

THE variety so observable in all the handiworks of Nature, is not more endless than the beauty displayed by each individual form. The traveller who first observed this curious insect, would hardly have ventured to describe its peculiarities on his own single authority, its appearance being so unlike anything before known. To have said that it throws out a light, bright enough to read the smallest print by, and that, when several were tied to the end of a stick, they afforded nearly as much light as a torch, would hardly have met with belief; yet both these facts are undoubtedly true. The part of the insect in which this property is seated, is the head, which is large, and of an oblong shape; during the day, it is transparent like a bladder, and delicately marked with red and green. The body is ornamented with the same colours, but much more brilliantly. It is a native of South America, and common in Surinam.

Madame Merian, the celebrated writer on insects, gives an interesting description of the effect produced by their appearance at night. "Some Indians having one day brought a number of Lantern Flies, I put them into a great box, being at that time ignorant of

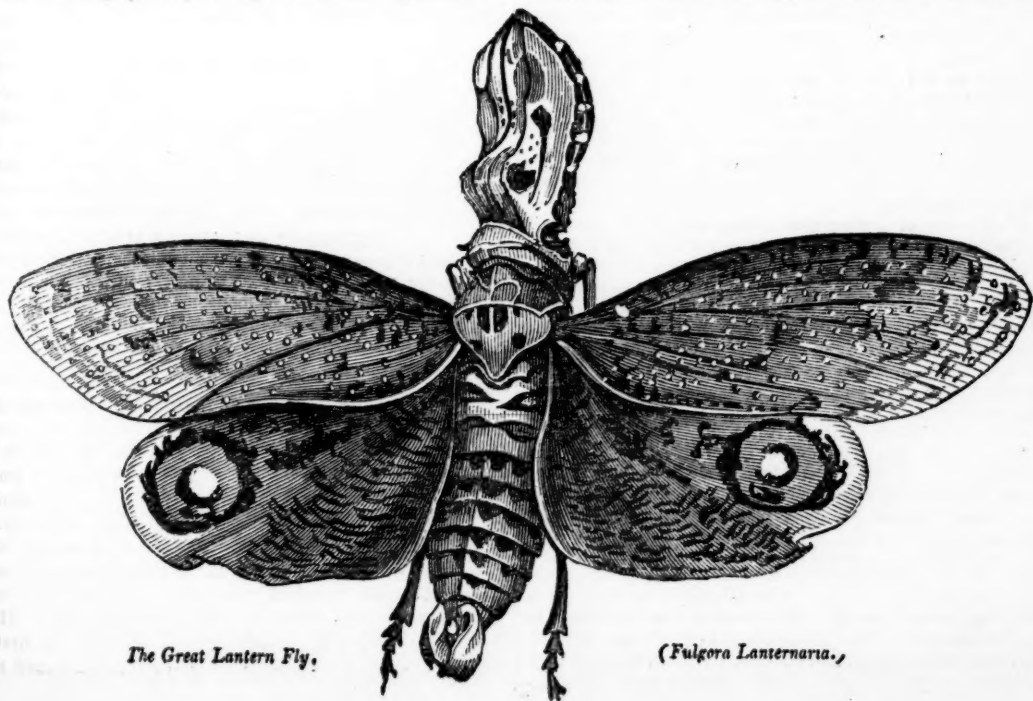
their luminous properties. During the night, hearing a noise, I jumped out of bed, and a candle being brought to me, I soon found that the sound came from the box, which I quickly opened; but, frightened at seeing a flame, or, I should rather say, as many flames as there were insects, proceed from it, I at first dropped it. Having recovered, however, from my astonishment, or rather fright, I recaptured all my insects, in admiration of their splendid appearance."

Of the Lantern flies there are several kinds; the most noted of which are, the species represented in the cut; and another, less in size, which is frequent in China. The only English insect that possesses this luminous power in any degree, is the glow-worm, the female of which may be frequently found on a moist bank, in a warm evening of autumn, giving out a feeble blue light, of sufficient power to tinge the blades of grass, to about the distance of an inch around it.

THE GIPSIES.

THE following account is abridged from a work entitled *The Gipsies' Advocate*, written by Mr. Crabb, who has been long active in promoting an establishment at Southampton for improving the condition of those extraordinary people. The profits of that book being appropriated to the funds of the institution, it is hoped that the extracts here given, may induce some of our readers to purchase a publication in which they will find so many interesting details of this long-neglected people, and of an establishment which has already been productive of much good.

Of the origin of these wanderers of the human race, the learned are not agreed in their opinions; for we have no authentic records of their first emigrations. Some suppose them to be the descendants of Israel, and many others, that they are of Egyptian origin. But the evidence adduced in confirmation of these opinions appears very inconclusive. Those who suppose them to be of Hindostanee or Suder origin, have much the best proof on their side; a gipsy has a countenance, and quickness of manner, which bear a strong resemblance to these people: nor is this mere assertion. The testimony of the most intelligent travellers, many of whom have long resided in India, fully supports this opinion. But the strongest evidence of their Hindoo



The Great Lantern Fly.

(Fulgora Lanternaria.)

origin is the great resemblance their own language bears to the Hindostanee. Grellman, that respectable author, declares, that twelve out of thirty words of the gipsies' language are either purely Hindostanee, or nearly related to it. Brand, in his *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, is of opinion that the first gipsies fled from Asia, in the years 1408 and 1409, when the cruel Timur Beg ravaged India, with a view to proselytize the heathen to the Mohammedan religion; at which time about 500,000 human beings were butchered by him. Some suppose, that, soon after this time, many who escaped the sword of this human fury, came into Europe through *Egypt*, and on this account were called, in English, *gipsies*.

The Suder cast of Asiatic Indians were a degraded people—a people looked on as the lowest of the human race; and with an army seeking their destruction, they had every motive to leave, and none to stay in Hindostan.

The gipsies are very numerous; amounting to about 700,000. It is supposed that there are about 18,000 in this kingdom. But be they less or more, we ought never to forget—that they are branches of the same family with ourselves,—that they are capable of being fitted for all the duties and enjoyments of life.

There are many genuine features of humanity in the character of this degraded and despised people. Their constantly retaining an affectionate remembrance of their deceased relatives affords a striking proof of this statement: and their attachment to the horse, donkey, rings, snuff-box, silver spoons, and all things, except the clothes, of the deceased, is very strong. With such articles they will never part, except in the greatest distress: and then they only pledge some of them, which are redeemed as soon as they possess the means. They have a singular custom of burning all the clothes belonging to any one among them deceased, with the straw, litter, &c., of his tent. Most families visit the graves of their near relatives, once in the year; generally about the time of Christmas.

It is not often that a gipsy is seen well dressed, even when they possess costly apparel; but their women are fond of finery. They are much delighted with broad lace, large ear-drops, a variety of rings, and glaring colours; and, when they possess the means, show how great a share they have of that foolish vanity, which leads many, destitute of the faith, and hope, and love, and humility of the Gospel, into utter ruin. A remarkable instance of the love of costly attire in a female gipsy is well known to the writer. The woman alluded to obtained a very large sum of money from three maiden ladies, pledging that it should be doubled by her art in conjuration. She then decamped to another district, where she bought a blood-horse, a black beaver hat, a new side-saddle and bridle, a silver-mounted whip, and figured away in her ill-obtained finery at the fairs. It is not easy to imagine the disappointment and resentment of the covetous and credulous ladies, whom she had so easily duped. Nor indeed are the males of this people less addicted to the love of gay clothing, if it suited their interests to exhibit it. Some gipsies try to excel others in the possession of silver buttons. They will sometimes give as much as fifteen pounds for a set. The Author has by him, belonging to a gipsy, three massive rings soldered together, and with a half-sovereign on the top, which serves instead of a brilliant stone.

The anxiety of a gipsy parent to preserve the purity of the morals of a daughter, is strongly portrayed in the following fact. The Author wished to engage, as a servant, the daughter of a gipsy, who was desirous of quitting her vagrant life; but her mother strongly objected for some time; and when pressed for the reason of such objection, she named the danger she would be exposed to in a town, far from a mother's eye. After having promised that the morals of the child should be watched over, she was confided to his care. It is worthy of remark, that all the better sort of gipsies teach their children the Lord's Prayer.

The trades they follow are generally chair-mending, knife-grinding, tinkering, and basket-making, the wood for which they mostly steal, but in general, neither old nor young among them do much that can be called labour; and it is lamentable that the greatest part of the little they do earn, is laid by to spend at their festivals; for like many tribes of uncivilized Indians, they mostly make their women support their families, who generally do it by swindling and fortune-telling. Their baskets introduce them to the servants of families, of whom they beg victuals, to whom they sell trifling wares, and tell their fortunes, which indeed is their principal aim, as it is their greatest source of gain.

Many of these idle soothsayers endeavour to persuade the people whom they delude, that the power to foretell future events, is granted to them from heaven, to enable them to get bread for their families. It would be well, were the prognostications of these women encouraged only among servants; but this is not the case. They are often consulted by those who ought to know and *teach them* better; and it is astonishing how many *respectable* people are led away with the artful flattery of such visitors. They forget that the gipsy fortune-teller has often made herself acquainted with their connexions, business, and future prospects, and do not consider that God commits not his secrets to the wicked and profane, and that the power of foretelling future events can come from Him alone, when, for some wise and great purpose, He is pleased to grant it.

Although the gipsies, on account of their unsettled habits, their disposition to evil practices, and their ignorance of true religion, may be said to be in a most lamentably wretched state; yet is their condition not desperate. They are rational beings, and have many feelings honourable to human nature. They are not, as the heathens of other countries, addicted to any system of idolatry, and, what is of infinite encouragement, they inhabit a land of Bibles and of Christian Ministers; and although, at present, they derive so little benefit from these advantages, there are many of them willing to receive instruction.

Some circumstances which occurred in 1827, gave rise to the idea of forming a society for the improvement of this people; and the promoters of it have to rejoice over the success that has attended its efforts, though it has also experienced great and manifold disappointments.

Sixteen reformed gipsies are now living at Southampton, and in addition to these, who have retired from a wandering life, and are pursuing habits of honest industry, three other families, whose united number is sixteen, begged the privilege of wintering under the care of the Society, in the beginning of 1831. These gipsies regularly attended divine service twice on a Sunday, and on the other evenings of the week, the adults went to school, to learn to read. The children were placed at one of the infants' schools.

The observation of a gipsy woman is of importance, as it shows the great necessity there is for the gipsies to be taught to read. *My being able to read myself*, said she, *has a great deal more effect upon me than it would if another read it to me, and I could not read; for now I am surer it is in the book.*

Having furnished a history of the gipsies, such as he hopes will be beneficial to the race whose conduct, condition, and necessities it narrates, the author concludes with an earnest prayer, that these poor hard-faring wanderers may be speedily rescued from their present forlorn condition.

A POPULAR CALENDAR.

It being intended to devote a portion of this work to the communication of popular intelligence, under the above title, a familiar explanation of the terms CALENDAR, ALMANACK, YEAR, MONTH, WEEK, and DAY, is here given, as preliminary to more particular information, which will be introduced in future numbers of the SATURDAY MAGAZINE.

CALENDAR and ALMANACK.

THE word CALENDAR (which is sometimes spelt Kalendar), is, properly, a *register of time or dates*; in which acceptation it was used by the Romans, as the word ALMANACK was by the Germans, and our Saxon forefathers.

Calendar, as some state, is derived from the Latin *Calendarium*, which was the account-book kept by the Roman usurers, of the money which they lent out upon interest, and which they were in the habit of calling in, or claiming, on the *Calends*, or first day of each month. But it is more probable that the words Calendar and Calendarium are both to be traced to the ancient Roman custom of publicly proclaiming or *calling* the *Calends* and other periods of each month, on the appearance of every new moon. This practice continued until the year 450 after the building of Rome, when Caius Flavius, the *Ædile*, or chief magistrate, ordered the *Fasti*, or *Calends*, to be affixed upon all the places of public resort, in order that the dates of the approaching festivals might be more generally and exactly known. In fact, these public notices or registers of coming events, were called *Fasti Calendares*.

The etymology, or derivation, of ALMANACK has been

much disputed; many writers derive it from the Arabic article *Al* (the) and the Greek word *manakos* (a lunar circle); others, from the Hebrew *manach* (to count); whilst Dr. Johnson says that the Greek word *men*, pronounced *maen* (a month), enters into its composition. The explanation given by the celebrated antiquarian Verstegan, of the origin and use of this word, seems worthy of notice. He says, "Our Saxon ancestors used to engrave on certain squared sticks, about a foot in length, the courses of the moons of the whole year; whereby they could certainly tell when the new moons, full moons, and changes should happen; as also their festival-days; and such a carved stick they called an *AL-MON-AGHT*; that is to say, *Al-mon-heed*; to wit, the regard or observation of all the moons; and hence is derived the name of Almanack."—An instrument of this kind, of a very ancient date, is to be seen in St. John's College, Cambridge; and there are still, in the midland counties, several remains of them.

YEARS.

THE word YEAR is purely Saxon, and is supposed by some to be derived from *æra*; whilst others deduce both words from the Greek *ear*, or Latin *ver* (Spring); because many of the Ancients were in the habit of dating the commencement of the year from Spring. In the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, the word *year* is expressive of a ring or circle:—the Egyptians, also, represented it by a snake placed in a circular position, with its tail in its mouth; whence, perhaps, the name of the *Zodiac*, or that imaginary circle which is made by the sun in the heavens, during the twelve months.

The time in which the sun performs its journey through the twelve *Signs* of the *Zodiac*, comprehends 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 48 seconds; and is, therefore, styled the *NATURAL, SOLAR, or TROPICAL Year*.

The *SIDEREAL, or ASTRAL Year* is the time which elapses from the sun's passage from any particular fixed star, until its return to it again; and is just twenty minutes and twenty-nine seconds longer than the *Natural or Solar Year*.

The *LUNAR Year*, consists of Twelve Lunar Months, or that period during which the moon passes twelve times through its various phases, or changes.

The *COMMON, or CIVIL Year*, in use with us, and established by law, contains 365 days, during three successive years; but in each fourth year, an *intercalary* or additional day is inserted, in order to make up the number 366; such additional day being considered equivalent to the time lost by not counting the five hours and forty-nine minutes at the end of each of the four years, from one *BISSEXTILE, or LEAP Year*, to another. The word *Leap*, sufficiently explains the act of passing over the hours in question. This plan was invented by Julius Cæsar, or by Sosigenes, the Egyptian mathematician, who assisted him in rectifying the Calendar. The additional or *intercalary day*, is, with us, always placed in the month of February, which, consequently, in *Leap Year*, consists of twenty-nine days; the usual number being 28. Cæsar placed it in the month of March, by reckoning the 6th day of the Calends of that month twice over; hence the term *Bissextile*, from the words *bis* (twice) and *sex* (six), or *sextilis* (sixth day). But, by the Gregorian alteration, the fourth year coming at the close of a century, is not a leap year, unless the number of hundreds be a multiple of four. Thus 1600 was a leap year, 1700 and 1800 were not, 2000 will be.

The reckoning of time by the course of the sun or moon, was attempted in various ways by different ancient nations; but they, finding that their minor divisions of time did not correspond with the courses in question, endeavoured to prevent confusion by ordaining a certain number of days to be *intercalated*, or inserted, out of the common order; so as to preserve the equation of time. The *Egyptian Year* (as used by Ptolemy,) consisted of 365 days, which were divided into twelve months of thirty days each; besides five *intercalary days* at the end. The *Egyptian Canicular, or Natural Year*, was computed from one *heliacal* rising of the star Sirius, or *Canicula*, to the next.

By the regulation of Solon, the ancient *Greek year* was *lunar*, and consisted of twelve months; each containing thirty and twenty-nine days, alternately: and, in every revolution of nineteen years, the third, fifth, eighth, eleventh, sixteenth, and nineteenth, it had an *intercalary month*; in order to keep the New and Full Moons to the same seasons of the year.

The ancient *Jewish year* was the same as the *Greek one*; only that it was made to agree with the *Solar year* by adding eleven, and sometimes twelve days, at the end; or an *intercalary month*, when necessary. The modern *Jewish year* consists of twelve lunar months generally; but sometimes of thirteen; that is, when an *intercalary month* is inserted.

The *Turkish year* consists of twelve lunar months of thirty and twenty-nine days, alternately; sometimes of thirteen.

The ancient *Roman year*, as settled by Romulus, was *lunar*, but contained only ten months, which were irregular, and comprehended 304 days in all; being a number fifty days short of the true *lunar year*, and sixty-one days of the *solar*. Romulus added the requisite number of days at the end of the year. Numa Pompilius added two months; making the year consist of 355 days; thereby exceeding the *lunar year* by one day, but being short of the *solar* one by ten days. Julius Cæsar, during his third consulship, and whilst he was *Pontifex Maximus*, or high priest of Rome, reformed the calendar by regulating the months according to their present measure, and adding an *intercalary day* every fourth year to the month of February, but he being assassinated before his plan could be fully brought into operation, the emperor Augustus perfected and established what his kinsman had begun. The *Julian year*, which consisted of 365 days and 6 hours, was however, still incorrect; for it was found to be too long by about eleven minutes, which in 131 years would be equal to one day—consequently, there was a further reformation of the calendar by pope Gregory, in the year 1582. He cut off eleven days, by calling the fourth of October the fifteenth. This alteration of the style was gradually adopted in the several countries of the European continent; but in Russia, in some of the Swiss cantons, and in the countries of the East, the *old style* is still preserved.

The Parliament of England adopted the *Gregorian plan*, in 1752, by enacting that eleven days should be omitted that year: all dates, therefore, previous to 1752, are said to be according to the *OLD STYLE*; whilst those since that period, are deemed to be according to the *NEW STYLE*. In 1800, which was properly a *bissextile*, or leap year, the *intercalary day* was omitted: hence, the difference between the old and new style is now twelve days. The *Gregorian regulation* does not absolutely preclude all error in future; but that is likely to be so trifling, as not to require particular attention.

The beginning of the year has by no means been the same in different ages and countries. The Chaldeans, the Egyptians, and the Jews, in all civil affairs, began it at the *autumnal equinox*. The ecclesiastical year among the Jews, the common year of the Persians, and of the Romans under Romulus, commenced in the spring; a mode still followed in many of the Italian States. Both the *equinoxes*, as well as the *summer solstice*, were each the commencing date in some of the states of Greece. The Roman year, from the time of Numa, began on the calends of January; the Arabs and Turks compute from the 16th of July; the Christian clergy formerly commenced the year on the 25th of March*; a method observed in Great Britain, generally, in civil affairs, until 1752; from which period our civil year has begun on the 1st of January, except in some few cases, in which it still commences on the "Day of Annunciation," or the 25th of March. In Scotland, the year was, by a proclamation, bearing date so early as the 27th of November, 1599, ordered thenceforth to commence, in that kingdom, on the 1st of January; instead of the 25th of March.

The English Church, still, in her solemn service, renews the year on the *First Sunday in Advent*, which is always that next to, or on, *St. Andrew's Day*.

Our ancestors, after the establishment of Christianity, usually began their year at *Christmas*, and reckoned the commencement of their *æra* from the incarnation, or birth of Christ. William the Conqueror, however, introduced the method of substituting the first year of his own reign for the Christian *æra*. At subsequent periods, the English reverted to the ancient custom: but all State proclamations, patents, charters, and Acts of Parliament, have continued to be dated from the commencement of the reigns of the respective sovereigns, with the addition of the words, "and in the year of our Lord, &c."

The Russian government did not adopt the Christian *æra*

* The Church of Rome dated from the Sunday succeeding the full moon which occurred next after the vernal equinox; or, if the full moon happened on a Sunday, the new year commenced on that day.

until the time of Peter, in 1725; their previous practice had been to reckon from the world's age, or the *year of the creation*

MONTHS

This division of the year appears to have been used before the flood*; and as it is naturally framed by the revolutions of the Moon, the MONTHS of all nations were originally *lunar*; that is, from one New Moon to another. In a more enlightened period, the revolutions of the Moon were compared with those of the Sun; and the limits of the Months, as the component parts of a Year, were fixed with greater precision. The Romans divided each month into *Calends*, *Nones*, and *Ides*; the *Calends* were the first day of the month, the *Nones* were the 7th, and the *Ides* the 15th of March, May, July, and October; in the other months, the *Nones* fell on the 5th, and the *Ides* on the 13th. The days of each month, according to this form, were counted backwards; thus, the 18th of October was called the *15th day before the Calends of November*, &c.—which method of counting we shall further explain on a future occasion.

In the year 1793, the French Government had a new Calendar constructed, in which they adopted the following fanciful designations for each month:—

	French Months.	Signification.	Eng. Months.
AUTUMN	1. Vindemiaire	Vintage Month, from	Sept. 22.
	2. Brumaire	Foggy Month.....	Oct. 22.
	3. Frimaire	Frosty, or Sleety Month.....	Nov. 21.
WINTER	4. Nivose	Snowy Month	Dec. 21.
	5. Pluviose	Rainy Month	Jan. 20.
	6. Ventose	Windy Month	Feb. 19.
SPRING	7. Germinal	Springing or Budding Month, March 21.	
	8. Floreal	Flowering Month	April 20.
	9. Prairial	Hay Harvest Month	May 20.
SUMMER	10. Messidor	Corn Harvest Month	June 19.
	11. Thermidor	Heat Month	July 19.
	12. Fructidor	Fruit Month	Aug. 19.

This *new* Calendar, which, after all, was only a plagiarism, or copy, of one used in Holland from time immemorial, like many of the absurd institutions which sprang from the French Revolution, was laid aside in a few years, from the circumstance of its utter unfitness for the seasons, even as they occur in the several provinces of France itself;—how much less applicable, therefore, must they have been to other countries, where the climates and seasons vary so much from each other! A Calendar, to be worthy of universal adoption, must be capable of universal application: not so that of the French *Philosophers*, which, independently of its discordance with those of all civilized nations, had not even the merit of indicating those very seasons from which it professed to derive its character. The late Mr. Gifford ridiculed this new-fangled method of registering time by the following ludicrous, but happy, translation of the Republican months and seasons:—

AUTUMN.... Wheezy, sneezy, freezy;
WINTER.... Slippy, drippy, nippy;
SPRING.... Showery, flowery, bowery;
SUMMER.... Hoppy, croppy, poppy.

WEEKS.

It is probable that this measure of time has existed in the East from the earliest ages; but the Greeks certainly never used such a mode of division. They divided each month of thirty days into three *Decades*, or equal portions of ten days each. Thus, the 5th day of the month was the 5th day of the *first Decade*;—the 15th was the 5th of the *second Decade*;—and the 25th, the 5th of the *third Decade*. This division was adopted by the French in their Revolutionary Calendar, in order to get rid of the Sabbath-day.

The Jews have ever marked their time by *sevenths*, according to the command given by God himself, for labouring during only *six* days of each week, and resting on the seventh, which was consequently set apart, or consecrated, to the service of their Creator;—nay, they not only hallowed the seventh day, or *SABBATH*, which formed a portion of their *week of days*; but they had, also, their *weeks of years*, which consisted of seven years; and their *Jubilees*, or rejoicing periods, which were celebrated by many acts of justice, forgiveness, and restitution, at the end of every *week of seven times seven years*. The Hebrews, the Assyrians, Egyptians, Arabians and Persians, all had this custom of reckoning by weeks. The origin of computation by *sevenths*, has been vehemently contested by

* Noah, as we find it recorded in the Bible, reckoned by months of 30 days each; and from him that mode of computing the year is supposed to have been adopted by the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and other Oriental nations.

some authors; who say that the four quarters or intervals of the Moon (the *phases*, or changes, of which are about seven days distant) originally gave occasion to this mode of division. But it seems more reasonable to conclude that it arose from the traditional accounts of the *first seven days* of the world's existence.

Although each *lunar* month contains four weeks, or four sevenths, the *solar* month, or that regulated by the passage of the Sun through each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, generally contains two or three days more; consequently, as we have twelve solar months in each year, we have fifty-two weeks and one day over, instead of forty-eight weeks, which would be the exact number, were our year regulated merely by the revolutions or changes of the moon.

The word *WEEK* is of Saxon origin, and signifies a *numerical series*, generally, (having nearly the same meaning as *way*, which is measured by successive steps,) although now expressive only of the space of *seven days*.

DAYS.

The word *DAY* is derived from, or synonymous with, the Saxon *Daeg*; and the Saxons are supposed to have had it from the same source, as the Roman word *Dies* (a day), which in its turn, is said to be derived from *Dii*, or Gods; by which name the Romans called the planets.

The word *Day*, in its strict sense, signifies that portion of time, during which we receive the light of the sun; but, more properly speaking, it includes the *night*, also; and is that space of time during which the Sun *appears to us* to make one revolution round the Earth:—to speak with astronomical precision, it is that space of time in which the Earth makes one revolution round its own axis, during its annual or yearly progress around the Sun.

In different nations and ages, the modes of reckoning the beginning of the day have been various. According to the computation of the ancient Syrians, Babylonians, Persians, and the inhabitants of Hindostan, the day commenced at the *rising of the sun*; with the modern Greeks it is the same. The Athenians, and other ancient inhabitants of Greece, as well as the ancient Gauls, began theirs at *sun-set*; which mode is still followed by the Jews, the Austrians, the Bohemians, the Silesians, the Italians, and the Chinese. The ancient inhabitants of Italy computed their day from midnight; which mode is now in common use with us and all other European nations, with the above exceptions. The Mahometans calculate from one *twilight* to another. The ancient Egyptians dated from *noon* to *noon*;—which mode is at this day, and has always been, followed by astronomers; because that *instant of time* can be ascertained with greater precision than any other.

The Romans gave to each of the *seven* days of their week, the name of one of the heavenly bodies: thus, *Dies Solis*, signifies the day of the sun (*Sunday*); *Dies Luna*, the day of the moon (*Monday*); *Dies Martis*, the day of Mars (*Tuesday*); *Dies Mercurii*, the day of Mercury (*Wednesday*); *Dies Jovis*, the day of Jupiter (*Thursday*); *Dies Veneris*, the day of Venus (*Friday*); and *Dies Saturni*, the day of Saturn (*Saturday*).—From this source the English language has received Sunday, Monday, and Saturday, by *translation*; but Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, were derived from the ancient Saxon and Danish deities, *TURSCO*, *WODIN*, *THOR*, and *FREYA*, or *FREGA*.—In all Parliamentary bills, acts, journals, and other documents, the Roman names of the days of the week have at all times been used.

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